

# DEPARTMENT of the INTERIOR

## news release

FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE  
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife

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### WHOOPING CRANE POPULATION GROWS TO RECORD 49

The world's population of wild whooping cranes has increased to a record 49--with the possibility of more birds to come--the Interior Department's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife reported today.

An aerial survey late last week at the Aransas National Wildlife Refuge in Texas, where the rare birds arrive for the winter after spending the summer in the Canadian wilds, revealed 43 adult and 6 young whoopers on the refuge grounds or adjacent Matagorda Island.

This tops last year's record of 48 which consisted of 39 adult and 9 young. Only 14 whoopers existed in the wild when the Bureau began its annual count in 1938.

This year's migration may exceed 50. The Canadian Wildlife Service reported seeing three whoopers near the nesting grounds as late as October 25, and these birds and possibly others may not have arrived yet. The latest arrivals on record at Aransas came on December 21 when two birds showed up on that date in 1961.

This year's migration arrivals began on October 13 (the earliest recorded arrival was October 4, 1949) when a lone adult was seen on the refuge--two more provided company the next day.

Whooping cranes in captivity number 18, 12 of them at the Patuxent Wildlife Research Center near Laurel, Maryland.